

Relations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland

July 17, 2002

Mr. President, Madam First Lady, members of the Polish delegation, distinguished guests, on behalf of the American people, it is my great honor to welcome you to the United States.

This is the—only the second state visit of my administration, and it symbolizes the high importance America places on our friendship with Poland. This friendship is rooted in our common history and sustained by our common values.

This generation of Poles has written a story of courage and determination that has inspired America and has inspired the world. Out of a past filled with pain and oppression, Poland is constructing a future defined by greater freedom, good relations with its neighbors, and increasing influence throughout Europe.

And today, Mr. President, we meet as leaders of two strong, mature democracies, ready to shape a new era of freedom and security. Together, Poland and America are standing and fighting side by side in the war against global terrorism. From military forces to law enforcement, terrorist financing and intelligence, Poland's support and solidarity in this great struggle has been unqualified, and America is deeply grateful.

Our nations are determined to lead the way in NATO's efforts to develop new capabilities to meet new threats. We're united in our determination that our children will inherit a world defined not by fear and chaos but by tolerance and freedom.

Together, Poland and America are building that freedom on the continent of Europe. Today, a new Europe is within our

grasp, one that is whole and free and at peace for the first time in its history.

In November, the President and I will join other NATO leaders in Prague to decide on inviting new members into the Alliance. On this issue, Poland and America stand united. We believe in NATO membership for all European democracies ready to share in NATO's responsibilities. Our aim is for freedom and security to span the European Continent from the Atlantic and the Mediterranean to the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea.

Together, Poland and America are also building our common prosperity. The trade and investment that flows between our countries creates jobs and lifts lives on both continents. We're determined to bring the benefits of trade and markets to all our citizens.

Today, Poland and America are forging a new strategic relationship, but the friendship between our people is very old. Nine million Americans claim Polish descent. Over two centuries ago, when Americans were fighting for our independence, Poles fought alongside us. In the century just passed, as Poles reclaimed their independence, America stood by Poland. And today, Poland and America stand and fight together for our common freedom and for bringing the hope of freedom to all who seek it in the world.

Mr. President, in June of last year you welcomed Laura and me to Poland. You showed us a nation of deep faith, a central part of Europe's soul. And you showed us a nation alive with liberty and energy and

enterprise. Today Laura and I are honored to welcome you and the First Lady to an America that is proud to call Poland a friend, an ally, and a partner.

Thank you for coming, and welcome.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where

President Kwasniewski was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. In his remarks, President Bush referred to Jolanta Kwasniewska, wife of President Kwasniewski. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Kwasniewski.

The President's News Conference With President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland July 17, 2002

President Bush. It's an honor to welcome my friend the President of Poland to the White House. Mr. President, welcome.

President Kwasniewski. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Poland is a close friend and a good ally and an influential nation in the center of Europe. Poland has influence across Europe. America and Poland see the world in similar terms. We both understand the importance of defeating the forces of global terror, and America appreciates all that Poland is contributing to this great struggle.

Our nations also understand the importance of building a better world beyond terror, one where prosperity replaces poverty and democracy and tolerance replace dictatorship and hatred. Poland and the United States are part of the great alliance of liberty, and we're working to spread the hope of freedom and prosperity across the globe.

We had good talks this morning, and I want to highlight two initiatives we agreed on. First, we agreed to expand cooperation between our militaries. Both Poland and the United States are seeking to transform our Armed Forces and develop new capabilities. We need to meet the new threats such as terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. By sharing ideas and expertise, our militaries can help each other reach

out—reach our transformation goals faster and improve our ability to work together. We hope this initiative will be a model for similar efforts with other NATO Allies.

Second, our Governments agree to cooperate more closely to expand our economic ties. The Polish-American trade and investment relationship is important to both countries, and it's particularly important to creating jobs and high-tech growth opportunities in Poland. We will work to resolve some company-specific issues and also improve Poland's investment climate.

These two initiatives will help build our strong working relationship.

Tomorrow the President and I look forward to traveling to Troy, Michigan. I believe you have to go beyond Washington to truly capture the energy and diversity of our country. Mr. President, I think you'll like the trip. Troy is just one of countless communities across our Nation that has been enormously enriched by the contributions and values of Polish Americans. It will be a great honor for me to travel to such a community with the President of a free and independent Poland.

Mr. President.

President Kwasniewski. Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. President, let me once again emphasize how pleased I am to stand here on the hospitable land, the country that is so close